



# **Joys and Sorrows of Imaginary Persons: On Literary Emotions (Consciousness, Literature and the Arts)**

*Donald Wesling*

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*Joys and Sorrows of Imaginary Persons* is a literary approach to consciousness where Donald Wesling denies that emotion is the scandal or handmaid of reason—rather emotion is the co-creator with reason of human life in the world. Discoveries in neuro-science in the 1990s Decade of the Brain have proven that thinking and feeling are wrapped with each other, and regulate and fulfill each other. Accepting this co-creative equality, we reveal a new role for literature, or a traditional role we've repressed: literature as a set of processes in time where we've thought feeling through stories about the lives of imaginary persons. We need these stories in order to practice emotions for when we return to the world from reading. Donald Wesling argues that to be more accurate in our dealings with stories, we require a grammar of this new recognition, where we build up traditional stylistics by a more careful tracking of emotion-states as these are set into writing. The first half of *Joys and Sorrows of Imaginary Persons* offers a creative stock-taking of the current state of scholarship on emotion, based on wide reading in several fields. The second half gives three focused studies, rich in examples, of emotion as cognition, as story, and as historical structure of feeling.

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